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REPORT FROM WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON, D. C. — The Kennedy Administration has

won notable success in battles with Congress since January. The first threatened explosion centered on the touchy subject of softness toward Communism, and was a potential playground for exploitation by conservatives.

The battle revolved around a special Senate subcommittee headed by Senator John Stennis of Mississippi. The subcommittee considered questioning the censors of speeches by military officers but the Defense Department and State Department did not want their censors to answer questions.

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara stood the committee down and refused to let his subordinates answer these questions. A showdown was avoided only by President Kennedy's use of executive privilege to protect the prospective witnesses.

Then the Department of Defense announced a new troop indoctrination program — and thus took some of the sting out of the dissidents. But no one yet knows whether witnesses would have been abused by the subcommittee. Ex-judge Stennis conducted the hearings in an orderly manner — as far as they got.

On another battlefield, McNamara — like three predecessors before him — became embroiled with the House Armed Services Committee and its chairman, Carl Vinson of Georgia. Vinson was the E-70 bomber built quickly and engaged with the Air Force Chief of Staff Curtis LeMay. He did not think this country could afford to put all its eggs in the nuclear basket.

But McNamara's answer was service cuts. He said the Air Force would cut 10,000 men and 11,700 aircraft.

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Then the President and Vinson worked out a compromise. Once again Mr. Kennedy had squelched a potential explosive situation. The President is proving an excellent politician, and his experience on Capitol Hill, before he came to the White House, is credited with a lot of this handiwork.

The President's latest tiff with Richard Nixon is considered a victory in the White House — although this time the former Vice President did not concede. When former CIA Chief Allan Dulles issued a statement indicating that Mr. Kennedy did not know of Cuban invasion plans prior to his election as President, it was a difficult statement to answer.

Mr. Nixon did not withdraw his charge that Kennedy knew something was afoot, however, in spite of Republican Dulles' statement. He indicated his statement still stands.

The White House feels the American people will accept the Dulles statement, in view of the fact that Dulles is out of office, and a Republican. On the other hand, if Nixon knows something more, he may speak out on it, at a later date.

The G.O.P. has a chance to win representation in the South this year to a greater degree than has been possible in decades. There is even a Senate race in South Carolina — of all states that is not a certainty. The work done between now and November could produce a new situation in several Dixie states.

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